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APPLICATION NO.	FILING DATE	FIRST NAMED INVENTOR	ATTORNEY DOCKET NO.	CONFIRMATION NO.
10/810,240	03/25/2004	Robert J. Egan	5220-1	1768

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COTTINGHAM, JOHN R

ART UNIT	PAPER NUMBER
	3679

DATE MAILED: 08/27/2004

Please find below and/or attached an Office communication concerning this application or proceeding.

Office Action Summary	Application No.	Applicant(s)
	10/810,240	EGAN, ROBERT J.
	Examiner	Art Unit
	John R. Cottingham	3679

-- The MAILING DATE of this communication appears on the cover sheet with the correspondence address --

Period for Reply

A SHORTENED STATUTORY PERIOD FOR REPLY IS SET TO EXPIRE 3 MONTH(S) FROM THE MAILING DATE OF THIS COMMUNICATION.

- Extensions of time may be available under the provisions of 37 CFR 1.136(a). In no event, however, may a reply be timely filed after SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- If the period for reply specified above is less than thirty (30) days, a reply within the statutory minimum of thirty (30) days will be considered timely.
- If NO period for reply is specified above, the maximum statutory period will apply and will expire SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- Failure to reply within the set or extended period for reply will, by statute, cause the application to become ABANDONED (35 U.S.C. § 133). Any reply received by the Office later than three months after the mailing date of this communication, even if timely filed, may reduce any earned patent term adjustment. See 37 CFR 1.704(b).

Status

- 1) Responsive to communication(s) filed on _____.
 2a) This action is FINAL. 2b) This action is non-final.
 3) Since this application is in condition for allowance except for formal matters, prosecution as to the merits is closed in accordance with the practice under *Ex parte Quayle*, 1935 C.D. 11, 453 O.G. 213.

Disposition of Claims

- 4) Claim(s) 1-20 is/are pending in the application.
 4a) Of the above claim(s) _____ is/are withdrawn from consideration.
 5) Claim(s) _____ is/are allowed.
 6) Claim(s) 1-20 is/are rejected.
 7) Claim(s) _____ is/are objected to.
 8) Claim(s) _____ are subject to restriction and/or election requirement.

Application Papers

- 9) The specification is objected to by the Examiner.
 10) The drawing(s) filed on _____ is/are: a) accepted or b) objected to by the Examiner.
 Applicant may not request that any objection to the drawing(s) be held in abeyance. See 37 CFR 1.85(a).
 Replacement drawing sheet(s) including the correction is required if the drawing(s) is objected to. See 37 CFR 1.121(d).
 11) The oath or declaration is objected to by the Examiner. Note the attached Office Action or form PTO-152.

Priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119

- 12) Acknowledgment is made of a claim for foreign priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(a)-(d) or (f).
 a) All b) Some * c) None of:
 1. Certified copies of the priority documents have been received.
 2. Certified copies of the priority documents have been received in Application No. _____.
 3. Copies of the certified copies of the priority documents have been received in this National Stage application from the International Bureau (PCT Rule 17.2(a)).

* See the attached detailed Office action for a list of the certified copies not received.

Attachment(s)

- | | |
|--|---|
| 1) <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Notice of References Cited (PTO-892) | 4) <input type="checkbox"/> Interview Summary (PTO-413) |
| 2) <input type="checkbox"/> Notice of Draftsperson's Patent Drawing Review (PTO-948) | Paper No(s)/Mail Date. _____ |
| 3) <input type="checkbox"/> Information Disclosure Statement(s) (PTO-1449 or PTO/SB/08)
Paper No(s)/Mail Date _____ | 5) <input type="checkbox"/> Notice of Informal Patent Application (PTO-152) |
| | 6) <input type="checkbox"/> Other: _____ |

DETAILED ACTION

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 102

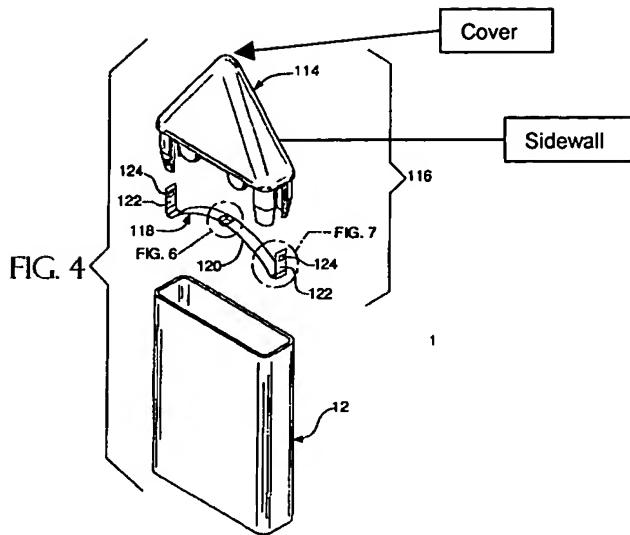
1. The following is a quotation of the appropriate paragraphs of 35 U.S.C. 102 that form the basis for the rejections under this section made in this Office action:

A person shall be entitled to a patent unless –

(e) the invention was described in (1) an application for patent, published under section 122(b), by another filed in the United States before the invention by the applicant for patent or (2) a patent granted on an application for patent by another filed in the United States before the invention by the applicant for patent, except that an international application filed under the treaty defined in section 351(a) shall have the effects for purposes of this subsection of an application filed in the United States only if the international application designated the United States and was published under Article 21(2) of such treaty in the English language.

2. Claims 1-20 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 102(e) as being anticipated by Steffes U.S. Patent 6,619,628. Steffes shows all of the claimed subject matter of a lockable protective cap in Figures 4-7.

Regarding claim 1, a lockable protective cap 114 for a post 12 having a top end and an engageable surface, the cap comprising: a sidewall (see figure below) having a first end and an open second end, said sidewall forming a post receiving opening (lower hollow portion); a cover (see figure below) at least partially closing said first end of said sidewall; a locking member 120 extending inwardly from said sidewall for engaging the engageable surface of the post.



Regarding claim 2, wherein said cover completely encloses said first end of said sidewall.

Regarding claim 3, wherein said cover provides a protective lip (under side surface) at said first end of said sidewall for covering at least a portion of the top end of the post.

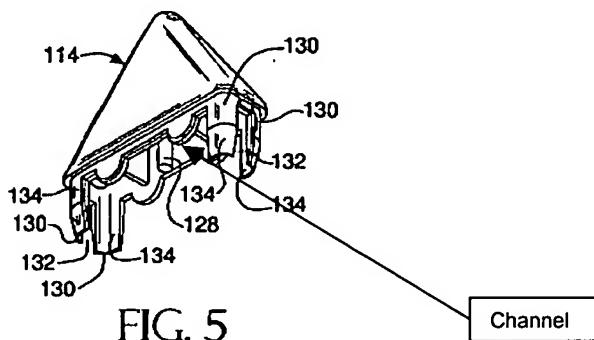
Regarding claim 4, wherein said locking member 120 extends inwardly from said sidewall at an angle from about 40 degrees to about 50 degrees.

Regarding claim 5, wherein said locking member 120 is formed by a portion of said sidewall extending inwardly into said post-receiving opening.

Regarding claim 6, wherein said locking member 120 comprises a rib 126.

Regarding claim 7, wherein said rib 126 extends substantially around the perimeter of said post-receiving opening of said sidewall. (It extends the complete circle and it is substantially around the perimeter of the sidewall.)

Regarding claim 8, wherein said sidewall further comprises a channel for mateably engaging a portion of the post. (see Figure below)



Regarding claim 9, wherein said locking member 120 is formed unitarily with said sidewall. (it is a unitary piece once assembled)

Regarding claim 10, wherein said locking member 120 comprises a surface for sliding over the engageable surface of the post. (the lower portion of the member 120)

Regarding claim 11, wherein at least one of said locking member and said sidewall are deformable to slide over the engageable surface of the post. (inherent from the figures)

Regarding claim 12, wherein said locking member comprises a tab 126.

Regarding claim 13, wherein said locking member 120 comprises a distal surface (lower portion of 126) displaced from said sidewall for engaging the engageable surface of the post.

Regarding claim 14, wherein a distance between an inner surface of said cover and an engaging surface of said locking member comprises a distance of at least about a center-to-center spacing between engageable surfaces of the post.

Regarding claim 15, wherein a distance between an inner surface of said cover and an engaging surface of said locking member comprises a distance of at least about two inches. (The size is not disclosed but it is inherent that it is about 2 inches) (A change in the size of a prior art device is a design consideration within the skill of the art. In re Rose, 220 F.2d 459, 105 USPQ 237 (CCPA 1955).)

Regarding claim 16, wherein a distance between an inner surface of said cover and an engaging surface of said locking member comprises a distance of at least about a center-to-center spacing between engageable surfaces of the post plus about the length of the engageable surface of the post.

Regarding claim 17, wherein a distance between an inner surface of said cover and an engaging surface of said locking member comprises a distance of at least about 2.75 inches. (The size is not disclosed but it is inherent that it is about 2.75 inches) (A change in the size of a prior art device is a design consideration within the skill of the art. In re Rose, 220 F.2d 459, 105 USPQ 237 (CCPA 1955).)

Regarding claim 18, a lockable protective cap 114 for a post having a top end and an engageable surface, the cap comprising: a sidewall 114 having a first end and an open second end, said sidewall (see figure above) forming a post receiving opening; a cover (see figure above) at least partially closing said first end of said sidewall; a locking member 120 extending inwardly from said sidewall for engaging the engageable surface of the post; and a means 134 for preventing said cap from rotating about the post. 19.

Regarding claim 19, wherein said means 134 for preventing said cap from rotating about the post comprises at least one of a channel (the curved portion behind one of the members 134), a slot (the curved portion behind one of the members 134), an opening (space between 134 and the half circle portions) in said sidewall, and a deformable sidewall.

Regarding claim 20, wherein said means 134 for preventing said cap from rotating about the post comprises said sidewall being formed to match the shape of at least a portion of the post.

Conclusion

3. The prior art made of record and not relied upon is considered pertinent to applicant's disclosure. Roy U.S. Patent 6,612,551, Steffes U.S. Patent Application Publication 2003/0160226, and Calzone ups 6,543,750 show similar inventions.

Any inquiry concerning this communication or earlier communications from the examiner should be directed to John R. Cottingham whose telephone number is (703) 306-3439. The examiner can normally be reached on Monday - Thursday, alternate Fridays.

If attempts to reach the examiner by telephone are unsuccessful, the examiner's supervisor, Daniel P. Stodola can be reached on (703) 308-2686. The fax phone number for the organization where this application or proceeding is assigned is 703-872-9306.

Information regarding the status of an application may be obtained from the Patent Application Information Retrieval (PAIR) system. Status information for published applications may be obtained from either Private PAIR or Public PAIR. Status information for unpublished applications is available through Private PAIR only. For more information about the PAIR system, see <http://pair-direct.uspto.gov>. Should you have questions on access to the Private PAIR system, contact the Electronic Business Center (EBC) at 866-217-9197 (toll-free).



John R. Cottingham
Primary Examiner
Art Unit 3679

jrc